



March 25, 2026

The Honorable Samantha Vang
Co-Chairs, Legacy Committee
MN House of Representatives
Centennial Building, 5th Floor
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Joe McDonald
Co-Chair, Legacy Committee
MN House of Representatives
Centennial Building, 2nd Floor
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Continued Support for Lock and Dam 5 (LD5) Invasive Carp Deterrent Project

Dear Co-Chairs Vang and McDonald and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the MN-FISH Coalition, I am writing to urge the House Legacy Finance and Policy Committee to affirm its continued support for the Lock and Dam 5 (LD5) Invasive Carp Deterrent Project and to send a clear message to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR): hold the course.

In 2024, the Legislature appropriated \$12 million from the Outdoor Heritage Fund — recommended unanimously by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council — to design and install an invasive carp deterrent at LD5 on the Mississippi River. The statutory deadline requires design completion by June 30, 2026, and installation by June 30, 2029. Good progress has been made: an interagency team is in place, a deterrent technology has been selected, and monitoring has begun below LD5. MN-FISH commends the DNR and its partners for these steps forward.

The core reality is this: acting now is far less expensive than waiting. And an invasive carp deterrent is effective and efficient – well worth taxpayer funding to preserve our lakes and rivers.

A recent research study has shown that to prevent large numbers of invasive carp from passing LD5 and breeding, the DNR, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other partners must do three things simultaneously:

- Reduce carp passage through LD5's spillway dam;
- Reduce passage through LD5 navigational lock; and
- Trap and remove carp that are deterred (Zielinski and Sorenson, 2021).

Trapping is an important component of the three because no deterrent can be 100% effective and deterred carp will just return otherwise. Trapping must be linked to deterrence to synergize its effects. Possible deterrent designs that do not consider trapping as part of the design could be overly and unnecessarily simplistic while underestimating overall efficacy.

Here's some additional information we'd like the House Legacy Committee to know as they review the project:

- Invasive carp are not yet reproducing in Minnesota waters — but that window is closing. Once they establish breeding populations upstream of LD5, no state in the nation has ever successfully removed them. We cannot afford Minnesota to become one of these states.
- States where invasive carp have become established now spend more than \$10 million per year on management efforts, with no end in sight. Minnesota's \$12 million upfront investment is not a burden — it is the most cost-effective option available.
- A sound-based deterrent at the lock, combined with continued commercial fishing, fish tracking and removal, and future dam gate deterrent research, gives Minnesota its best realistic chance of keeping invasive carp from reaching Lake Pepin, the St. Croix River, the Minnesota River, and the Twin Cities metro area.
- Illinois Governor Pritzker and Michigan Governor Whitmer recently pushed the Trump administration to restart federal funding for states in the Great Lakes region to fight and stop the spread of invasive carp.

MN-FISH urges this committee to direct the DNR to stay the course: complete deterrent design on schedule, maintain the multi-pronged management approach, and treat this project with the urgency it demands. If additional funding will be needed for long-term operations and maintenance, the Legislature should address that proactively — not use it as a reason to slow or abandon the work already underway.

Minnesota has a narrow and closing window to act before this becomes a far more expensive and intractable problem. The funding is in place. The partners are engaged. The science is clear. We ask that the Legislature ensure the political will matches all three.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support.

Sincerely,

Dave Osborne, Board Member
MN-FISH Coalition

C: Kristina Smitten, Executive Director, LSOHC